

Approved

April 9, 2014
The Compass School Council
Minutes
The Compass School
537 Old North Road
Kingston, RI

Call to order: Elizabeth Allen, Council President, calls the meeting to order at 6:07 pm

Roll Call of Members Present: Elizabeth Allen (EA), Cyrus Beasley (CB), Dina Mandeville (DM), Heidi Vasquez (HV) Hilary Downes-Fortune (HD), Michelle Clifford (MC) and Rick Rhodes (RR), Charlie Weygand (CW) and Marisa Gallagher(MG)

Also present: Michael Obel-Omia, Interim Director

Approval of minutes

DM motions to approve the March 12, 2014 Minutes.

RR seconds.

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion Passes

Committee Reports (Consent Agenda)

Development/Treasurers

- Bank statements look to be in order.
- Prepared 3 year budget forecast with backup reports on salary, transportation, and benefits.

Site Maintenance

Green house

- Heater should be plumbed this week
- Gas tank and hook up to follow

Open permits

- Prepared estimate for unpermitted work done to barn
 - \$58,000 for structural, siding and windows
 - \$5,000 electrical
- Will pull permit based on estimate with green house mechanical permit
- We will be on the hook for about \$500 to pull the permits
- The town will come and inspect/close out all permits the same day

Work party planned for this weekend

Learning

Approved

Learning Committee Meeting #1

Wednesday March 19, 2014 @ 3:30-Multipurpose Room

Attended: Hilary Downes Fortune, Heidi Vazquez, Joe Militello, Haryln Smile Benetti, Nikki Katsetos

Unable to attend: Kari Militello, Amy Crane, Alex Bejan

Agenda

Introductions (new members)

Joe is a retired middle school principal. He described the difference between a junior high model and middle school model and how his school transitioned to the middle school model.

Review purpose of learning committee and charge given by council

The council has charged this committee with communicating what makes our middle school unique and creating a vision for the future of our middle school program (Investigators and Navigators). This committee will serve to reflect on and communicate the strengths of our current program and look ahead to the future of our middle school program as we raise funds to design and create a space more suitable for learning at the middle school level. During our time on the committee we will:

- ☐ *Examine educational research about learning for middle school age students*
- ☐ *Review educational models of middle school programs with similar philosophies*
- ☐ *Gather evidence and examples about the strengths of our current program*
- ☐ *Make recommendations for changes to our middle school program that can be implemented and realized within a new building/space*

Generate a list of unique strengths of current program

Teaching and Curriculum Benefits:

- *5/6 is an elementary model.*
- *Classes are small (19) and curriculum is flexible based on student and family goals. For example: Hilary varies her math curriculum and instruction based on the level of the students she has. At times, 6th grade students have joined the Navigators for math.*
- *7/8 have ability-based math and ELA groups.*
- *Teacher's caseload is small. Teachers in 5-8 have 34-38 students compared to most middle school teachers who would have 100-200 students.*
- *Teachers use a Constructivist Philosophy.*
- *Navigator teachers have a dual certification in Math/Science and ELA/Social Studies. This allows for cross discipline learning and projects.*
- *Program allows for student choice for integrated projects.*

Emphasis on growing personally and socially:

- *Teachers spend time advising and mentoring students over two years in the multi-age classrooms.*
- *Students are taught to think and take educational risks.*
- *Students are assertive and are effective public speakers.*
- *Students are regularly asked to reflect and develop action plans to take responsibility for personal growth and academic goals.*

Opportunities:

- *Navigators go on a fall camping trip and other outdoor experiential learning opportunities such as kayaking.*
- *Navigators engage in longitudinal science research studies such as tree banding and phenology studies.*
- *Students have time outdoors and time to play.*
- *Students engage in dynamic activities such as garden, greenhouse, composting, and general care of the campus.*
- *Afterschool programs include: robotics, yearbook, orchestra/rock band, running club.*
- *Students have the option of participating in afterschool sports in their home districts if desired.*

Compile a list of sources and schools with best practices/ programs we'd like to research

- *Mona Anne Niedbala from the URI Curriculum Library is gathering articles and research for the committee to review. If you have suggestions on best practices, curriculum models, or research articles you'd like to contribute please email Heidi at vazquez9@cox.net.*
- *Materials will be sent out prior to the next meeting for members to review so that we can begin discussions about the sources at the meeting.*

Approved

Next Learning Committee Meeting will be Wednesday April 16th at 4:00 in the multipurpose room.

From the Bylaws: The Learning Committee is responsible for shaping and monitoring curriculum. The board of this committee will be comprised of faculty members as well as parents with special interests and applicable skills and training in the areas of development in any of the learning areas.

Each committee will be chaired by a member of The Compass School Council, and should include representation of teaching staff and families. The Committee structure includes the potential for invited members for the broader community including Non-Profit Sponsoring Agency and others who have expressed interest. While we welcome the participation of community members who do not have children enrolled at The Compass School, their involvement on committees must be approved by a vote on The Compass School Council.

Safety/Crisis Plan – No Report Submitted

Co-op Report

- There was a meeting on March 19th at the school that was well attended.
- The room parents have been decided upon and will help communicate Co-op event when necessary.
- Flag Football will start in May and will be held on 5/1, 5/8, 5/15, 5/22, and 5/29.
- Two Compass Clean-ups are being scheduled.
- The next meeting will be held Thursday, April 17th at 6:30.

Eco-Fair

- There are 16 confirmed vendors as of now.
- The band, Joe's Backyard Band, has been confirmed.
- The Silent Auction already has many confirmed donations.
- A google doc has been put together to track Silent Auction donations.
- We have reached out to URI to see about having MTI students volunteer.

RR motions to approve the consent agenda.

CB seconds.

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion Passes

Requests from community for agenda items and comments

Director's Report (MOO)

"A [person] is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I think that the students, faculty, and staff, working exceptionally hard this month of March, can feel as if each one has put his/her heart into his/her work and done his/her best. March is a long month on the calendar, as there are no scheduled days free, and the School was blessedly free of snow days. Of the ten months in which we hold classes (July and August being the only two at Compass that we formally do not), March shares with June the honor of no holidays. So, March allowed for real focused on instruction, and our faculty and staff took great advantage.

Progress reports were due 1 April for the second trimester, and they were delivered last week.

The reports are a thoughtful reflection of the good work that the students have done since December. That good work includes preparations for Arts Night, which went swimmingly at the Center for Biology and Life Sciences at URI. Council Member, Rick Rhodes provided the gorgeous space, and we took full advantage of it with a production of *The Tin Forest* and beautiful art displayed throughout the building. The parents, particularly Christine Heart-Skaggs and Paula Glen, assisted us in presenting an evening that honored the students' talents. And speaking of swimming and URI, Julia Beasley has assisted us in our collaborating with URI on a Friday afternoon swimming lessons. Several Navigators and Investigators participated in a running program with a senior from North Kingston and an alumna of Compass. The short running program culminated in a road race this past Saturday. In terms of athletic opportunity, Kate Tokarski and I are organizing a Compass team for Tour de Cure, which will raise funds for Diabetes research. Another great extracurricular activity that has engaged the students is Ms. Hilary's robotics team, which participated in a tremendous event on the campus of Brown University this past Saturday.

Inside the classroom, the students are busily working on projects, and the Investigators have recently completed a Civil War unit that featured students portraying various famous persons from that time and sharing stories during their project share last month. The Navigators are reading Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* and preparing for a puppet show production of the drama next month. Taking advantage of the good weather, the Explorers trundled down to the verdant pond to collect frog eggs and will watch the hatching process in their classrooms. The entire community is gearing up for the planting season, and I have spied several Steps outside preparing the beds, tilling the land. Cyrus is working with me to provide propane for the Greenhouse, so that we can nurture plants there before taking them outside. We hope to have fruits of that labor in the way of plants at the Eco-Fair, which Mr. Drew is busily planning with several colleagues and parents. I mentioned last month Ms. Diane's anxiety presentation, and I can say this month that the event was graciously and enthusiastically received. The rub, as we have seen for a number of excellent presentations, is that the event is sparsely attended. We invited Kingston Hill Academy, which comprised almost half the audience, but the whole audience was fewer than a dozen. Ms. Diane and I are eager to continue these opportunities for families, but we hope that more families will take advantage of them. We will consider creative ways to attract families.

Approved

From my desk, I have been working on insurance policies, Gmail migration, the calendar, the budget, transportation, improving instruction via working with RIDE, and serving as the sole representative at the Charter School Fair, held earlier in the month during Executive Director Search interviews. I am grateful for this good work and appreciate the opportunity to serve the students, faculty, staff, and families of the Compass School.

Sincerely,

Michael Obel-Omia

Calendar - Approve or discuss 2014-15 calendar.

Budget – Review sustainability projections for the budget, receive information, including information about transportation.

DM discussed the 3 year budget plan.

MOO asked that the minutes reflect that DM put in a lot of hard work and effort into the budget.

Nicole Gardner asked council to create a set system/procedure for projecting step scales.

Council Goals Roadmap – Review progress, make updates.

EA stated that council will hold an open meeting to work on updating the strategic plan.

Requests from community for agenda items and comments

CW motions to enter into **Executive session per RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1)** director, as relates to director search (if necessary) and **Executive session per RIGL 42-46-5(a)(3)** matters of school security

RR Seconds.

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion Passes

Return from Executive Session at 8:25 PM

Votes taken in Executive Session:

RR motions to lock the front and back door of the main building.

DM seconds.

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion Passes

CW makes a motion to offer a visit to Donald Holder to be followed by a council interview.

DM seconded.

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion Passes

Approved

RR motions to seal the executive session minutes
HD seconds

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion Passes

Announcements

8:26 PM Adjourn